

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

DRAFTED BY D:DLAMB:MS
APPROVED BY D:WCHRISTOPHER
S/S:0-LRMACFARLANE
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O 190118Z MAY 77 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 114997 TOSEC 040339

NODIS
FOR THE SECRETARY FROM CHRISTOPHER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS)

SUBJECT: EVENING READING

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF WEDNESDAY'S EVENING READING:

1. ISRAELI ELECTION. WITH MOST OF THE VOTE COUNTED, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE LIKUD HAS ACHIEVED A DECISIVE PLURALITY -- APPROXIMATELY 41 SEATS TO 33 FOR THE LABOR ALIGNMENT, 14 FOR YIGAL YADIN'S DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT (DMC), AND 12 FOR THE NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY (NRP). THE PROCESS OF FORMING A NEW GOVERNMENT COULD TAKE SEVERAL WEEKS, EVEN MONTHS. INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS WITH POTENTIAL PARTNERS HAVE ALREADY BEGUN, AND WILL BEGIN FORMALLY SHORTLY AFTER THE NEW KNESSET CONVENES ON JUNE 6 OR JUNE 13. AT THAT TIME, PRESIDENT KATZIR WILL ASK MENACHEM BEGIN TO TRY TO FORM A GOVERNMENT. IF BEGIN IS UNABLE TO DO SO WITHIN SIX WEEKS, THE PRESIDENT

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COULD ASK PERES TO TRY.

OUR PRESENT ESTIMATE IS THAT BEGIN WILL SUCCEED, BUT IT IS FAR FROM CERTAIN.
FOLLOWING ARE THE
FORMS THAT GOVERNMENT COULD TAKE, IN DESCENDING ORDER OF
LIKELIHOOD.

-- RIGHT-WING GOVERNMENT, CONSISTING OF LIKUD, THE NATION-AL RELIGIOUS PARTY, TWO SMALL EXTREME ORTHODOX RELIGIOUS PARTIES AND A SMALL EXTREME RIGHT SPLINTER, TOTALLING ABOUT 62 VOTES. SUCH A GOVERNMENT WOULD BE RELATIVELY HOMOGENEOUS IN POLICY TERMS, BUT HARDLINE AND UNLIKELY TO SHOW FLEXIBILITY ON THE WEST BANK.

-- LIKUD/NRP/DMC COALITION. DMC LEADER YADIN HAS JUST RE-ITERATED HIS PARTY'S INSISTENCE ON SEVEN CONDITIONS FOR JOINING ANY COALITION, INCLUDING NEW ELECTIONS WITHIN TWO YEARS UNDER A REFORMED ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND WILLINGNESS FOR TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS ON THE WEST BANK, THE LATTER OF WHICH IS CONTRARY TO THE POLICY OF LIKUD AND NRP. SHOULD YADIN REFUSE TO JOIN A LIKUD-LED COALITION WITHOUT THESE CONDITIONS, SOME HAWKS AND FORMER LIKUD MEMBERS IN DMC MIGHT BOLT AND RETURN TO LIKUD.

-- NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT, ENCOMPASSING LIKUD, THE LABOR ALIGNMENT AND NRP. THIS IS LIKUD'S AND NRP'S PREFERRED OPTION, BUT LABOR IS UNLIKELY TO COOPERATE. LABOR WILL PROBABLY PREFER TO STEP BACK IN THE EXPECTATION THAT A NARROWLY-BASED LIKUD-LED COALITION WILL FALTER.

-- LABOR/DMC/NRP COALITION IS A THEORETICAL POSSIBILITY BUT NRP'S PLEDGE NOT TO JOIN ANY COALITION WITHOUT LIKUD MAKES THIS MOST UNLIKELY.

-- NO GOVERNMENT/NEW ELECTIONS. WE CONSIDER THIS UNLIKELY.
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2. EGYPT-USSR. EMBASSY CAIRO BELIEVES THAT EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER FAHMY FAILED TO GIVE US ADVANCE NOTICE OF HIS SCHEDULED JUNE 9-10 MEETING WITH GROMYKO IN EUROPE BECAUSE HE SUSPECTED WE MIGHT TRY TO PREVENT A MOVE TOWARD NORMALIZATION OF EGYPT-USSR RELATIONS. ON THE EGYPTIAN SIDE, PRESSURE FOR NORMALIZATION COMES IN LARGE PART FROM THE MILITARY, WHICH HAS HAD DIFFICULTY IN OBTAINING SPARE PARTS FOR ITS SOVIET-BUILT EQUIPMENT. SADAT MAY ALSO WISH TO OFFSET SYRIA'S IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIETS. ALTHOUGH THE SOVIETS HAVE IGNORED PREVIOUS EGYPTIAN OVERTURES, THEY HAVE APPARENTLY DECIDED TO SEE WHETHER RELATIONS CAN BE IMPROVED. WE DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT THEY WILL BECOME INVOLVED IN ANY LONG-RANGE MILITARY COMMITMENTS.

3. THAILAND. OUR EFFORT TO REASSURE THAILAND THAT AMERICA IS NOT TURNING ITS BACK ON OLD FRIENDS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA HAS HAD SOME SUCCESS IN THE LAST FEW DAYS. FIRST,

THE SENATE REVERSED ITSELF AND RESTORED THE FULL \$8 MILLION FOR GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE BUDGETED FOR THAILAND FOR THE LAST YEAR OF A 26-YEAR PROGRAM. SECOND, YOUR COMMENTS TO THE THAI AMBASSADOR DURING HIS PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS ARE BEING REPORTED BACK TO THAILAND AS EVIDENCE OF NEW AMERICAN STRENGTH AND COMMITMENT IN THE AREA. FINALLY, THE LEADING THAI GENERAL, KRIANGSAK, REVERSED HIS PREVIOUS NEGATIVE COMMENTS ABOUT THE U.S. AFTER A TRIP HERE, COMMENTING PUBLICLY THAT "DESPITE SPECULATION TO THE CONTRARY, ... WE CANNOT HAVE A BETTER FRIEND THAN THE UNITED STATES." AS OUR NEW AMBASSADORS TAKE UP THEIR POSTS AND WE MAKE MORE DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE LEADERS OF THE REGION, I EXPECT WE WILL SEE MORE SIGNS THAT SOUTHEAST ASIA IS RECOVERING SOME OF ITS CONFIDENCE IN US AFTER THE TRAUMATIC END OF THE INDOCHINA WARS.

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4. MEXICO. THE CONSULTATIVE MECHANISM THAT YOU AND PRESIDENT LOPEZ-PORTILLO AGREED TO ESTABLISH WILL BE INITIATED AT A MEETING HERE ON MAY 26. CY WILL HEAD OUR DELEGATION; FOREIGN SECRETARY ROEL WILL LEAD THE MEXICAN SIDE. THE MEETING WILL SET THE AGENDAS FOR WORKING GROUPS ON GENERAL ECONOMIC ISSUES, ENERGY, FINANCE, UNDOCUMENTED ALIENS, AND BORDER PROBLEMS.

CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TOSEC, CAT-B, BRIEFING MATERIALS, MINISTERIAL VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 19-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE114997
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: DLAMB:MS
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: 1
Expiration:
Film Number: n/a
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 2
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770539/aaaabhgf.tel
Line Count: 148
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Message ID: 58d1cc8f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2448431
Secure: LOCK1
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EVENING READING
TAGS: OVIP, PINT, PFOR, US, IS, EG, UR, TH, MX, (VANCE, CYRUS R)
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/58d1cc8f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009